



Covered Bridge Gardens
CSA Newsletter
Week 5 of 16

Kate's Question

Do Plants Grow When It's Hot?

Thank you Kate for being so aware of the stress our plants have been under. Though we got some rain the early part of the month we have gotten none since. Plants are under a lot of stress on these really hot days. On days above 86 degrees the plants will start shutting down, and without enough water (like in our drought situation) the plants will close the openings in their leaves (stomata) to conserve moisture. This protects the plant from drying out and dying. Also, if the night time temperature stays above 70 degrees the plant slows down its' respiration and growth. In times of high stress plants will drop their blossoms. No blossoms, no fruit. Plant survival is the key word.



Special Sunflower Offer, 6 flowers for \$5

Many took advantage of this special offer last week. I loved sharing these bright sunny flowers and will continue the offer each week. Just let me know in advance and your flowers will be ready when you pick up your bag.

Covered Bridge Gardens

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The Nibbler

It beats me what people think of farmers.
We're not just a bunch of bean counters.
We are all ears when it comes to what's cooking.
We do love getting to the root of things.
We don't have a lot of lettuce in our pockets but we do have a sunny disposition.
And most of all we are outstanding in our field.



Mick and his father.



Potato Planter



Mick and Steve constructing one of the greenhouses 2011



Corn Sheller

Old Meets New

Covered Bridge Gardens is a blend of old and new, where low tech meets high tech. This year we planted all our potatoes with a hundred year old potato planter. We shell our popcorn one ear at a time with a hundred year old sheller.

I love seeing Mick and Steve crossing the generations to get work done. They both carry smart phones and text each other so they can communicate over the noise of the tractors.

Some of the chores take good old elbow grease. Something like pulling the weeds around the pepper plants is delicate work. You have to be careful not to disturb the small plants that are just starting to set blossoms. It takes our team of helpers several days to go down the 600 foot rows and clean around each one foot spaced plant. Picking takes a knowing eye and careful handling to bring the harvest back to the barn.

Once all the hand work is done preparing the harvest for you and the markets we then go high tech again to let you know on Facebook, our website, and mobile app what is available. This allows us to move our vegetable more quickly from the field to your table.

What truly makes all this come together is getting to know our members and We hope you are getting to know us better and find us available for you. That's what led to Kate's Questions in our newsletters.

If you want to get a clearer image of the farm then come and visit us for a true 3D experience. We love giving small tours and showing off the farm. If you want to visit just contact us and set up a time that works for both of us. Bring the digital cameras too.

Ingredient Highlights: *You will find more tips and recipes on our website.*

Tomatoes:

In your bags this week you are getting your first taste of this season's tomatoes. They were planted early in our high tunnel greenhouses. This method allows us to grow the plants right in the ground. The high structure allows equipment to drive in to work the soil. It also allows us to control the water supply so they don't get too much, like the field ones last year, or too little, like the ones this year.

We should have tomatoes past early frosts. We have several different varieties of heirloom that grow well in this controlled environment. We do have the small tomatoes, romas and yellow varieties planted in the field. They will be coming in a few more weeks.

We pick them while blushing so they will continue to ripen and be ready by the time you eat them. To continue ripening, set tomatoes on your kitchen counter. **Never refrigerate.** This signals the tomato to shut down and stop growing and causes it to lose its flavor. Only refrigerate after cutting.



Swiss chard leaves are tender and rich in moisture and require no additional liquid during cooking. To clean rinse leaves under running water and stand upright in a dish rack to let drain. To prepare Swiss chard hold leaf at the base of the stem over a bowl filled with water and use a sharp knife to slash the leafy portion from either side of the thick stem.

Toss the damp greens in hot oil seasoned with aromatics and spiced. Wilt in just 2-3 minutes in a covered pan. Once wilted, remove the lid to allow liquid to evaporate. Serve hot.

Cauliflower:

We grow the traditional white along with yellow, green and purple. They take a little more time to mature and you will hopefully see them in a later bag.

The cauliflower (*Brassica oleracea* var. *botrytis*) is a member of the *Cruciferae* family. It was cultivated in the Middle East but known in Europe by the 13th century. Its' dense white heads gave the plant its Old English name- coleflower or cabbage flower. It is often divided into florets and cooked or used raw in salads or dips. The whole head may be cooked and mashed like potatoes.

Nutritional Value:

Cauliflower is not quite so rich in vitamins and minerals as some of its relatives, but it contains valuable amounts of phosphorus, calcium, and sodium, and vitamin A and C. Cauliflower contains only 13 calories per 3 ½ oz.

The Vegetable Cookbook
General Editor Carol Bowen
Exeter Books of New York, 1984

Swiss Chard Recipe

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large bunch of fresh Swiss chard
- 1 small clove garlic, sliced
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 Tbsp water
- Pinch of dried crushed red pepper
- 1 teaspoon butter
- Salt

METHOD

1 Rinse out the Swiss chard leaves thoroughly. Remove the toughest third of the stalk, discard or save for another recipe (such as this [Swiss chard ribs with cream and pasta](#)). Roughly chop the leaves into inch-wide strips.

2 Heat a saucepan on a medium heat setting, add olive oil, a few small slices of garlic and the crushed red pepper. Sauté for about a minute. Add the chopped Swiss chard leaves. Cover. Check after about 5 minutes. If it looks dry, add a couple tablespoons of water. Flip the leaves over in the pan, so that what was on the bottom is now on the top. Cover again. Check for doneness after another 5 minutes (remove a piece and taste it). Add salt to taste, and a small amount of butter. Remove the Swiss chard to a serving dish

